Numb. 2.

The Athenian Mercury.

Resolving WEEKLY all the most

Nice and Curious Questions

Propos'd by the INGENIOUS.

Licensed and Entred according to Order. Tuesday, March, 24*th*. 1690.

HAving encouragement by a great many Letters to continue our *Gazett*, as an undertaking that will be very useful to many, (for we never expected of accomplishing that impossible Task of pleasing every Body,) we shall endeavour as general a satisfaction as we can, by answering whatsoever Questions or Objections are sent us, that are consistent with Modesty and pertinent for Information.

Quest. 1. *Whether the Author is not in League with the General Penny-Post Office?*

Answer. No, but we are in league with their Majesties Interest, having this first Week about forty Penny-Post Letters, which, (with what this number may probably increase to in a little time,) will be a considerable advancement *per Annum*, to that Branch of their Majesties Revenue.

Quest. 2. *What can Prompt that Monster of a Man, that calls himself by the Name of Protestant, to bring in the* French, *and restore King* James?

Answ. He may well be call'd a Monster (and a greater than *Polyphemus*, to whom Nature gave but one Eye) that cannot see the peculiar Hand of God in the late happy Revolution, and the particular Guardian Care of Heaven towards the Instrument, his Sacred Majesty, in his first Attempt, his Action at the *Boyne*, and his late Voyage into *Holland*. I know no reason these Opposers of Heaven can pretend for their Charge in the Question, but Interest, or a misguided Conscience, or both; and I am sure they themselves cannot find out any other so soon as they might find out their Error, if they took half the pains in unprejudic'd thinking, as they do in an unaccountable acting.

Quest. 3. *What probable Conjecture may be given of the Efficient Cause and Nature of the Spouts, which Mariners frequently meet with in the Mediterranean, but more especially in the* East-Indian *and* Persian *Voyages?*

Answ. Those Seas are notorious for various Winds; two Ships in a Right Line approaching each other, have sometimes both of them a very fair Gale of Wind; many such opposite Winds meeting together in one Center, produce that we call a Whirl-Wind, which finding a Cloud that is ready to break, buoy it up so long that coming too near the Water, it has not air enough under it to expand and scatter it into a Shower, but falls in many hundred Tuns together; You may experience this Truth by emptying a Cup or Glass of Water out of your Chamber Window all at once, and you shall see it spread abroad, till it appears as thin as Paper, and then immediately flyes into drops for a very great Breadth; but if you empty the Water near the Ground, it has not Air enough under it to bear it up for a dissipation, there is another sort of Spouts, if I have answered one for another, let the Inquirer distinguish in the next.

Quest. 4. *Whether it is better to cheat ones self or another?*

Answ. I don't yet see a possibility of being inevitably put upon such an unhappy Choice, so that this Question seems to be put for Arguments sake; however, upon a supposition of the possibility, we assert 'tis better to cheat another: In *Life* and *Death* the great *Good* and *Evil* of Nature, the Law of Self-preservation is taught by the meanest Insect, now if it holds in greater, it holds in lesser Circumstances, for 'tis an undeniable Maxim, that every particular is of the same Nature as its general, or else it is no particular of that general; 'Tis a common saying amongst some Persons, that they had rather spend five pound, than be cheated of five shillings, which is as much as to say they had rather cheat themselves of five pounds than be cheated by another of five shillings; or they had rather kill themselves twenty times, (if possible) than be killed by another once. Certainly he deserves to be beg'd who rather than defend himself upon an assault, will abuse himself and break his own Head; the Case is much the same, and the Application too, if the Inquirer pleases.

Quest. 5. *What sort of Men are the Poorest in the World?*

Answ. Poverty is but a suggestion of our own Fancy; therefore those Men are the Poorest, who think they want most, not those that possess least.

Quest. 6. *What is the Cause of Dreams? and why doth a Person receive equal, if not more enjoyment in a Dream than in a thing real?*

Answ. Many Causes are by Naturalists assign'd; the chiefest is our Complexion or Constitution; the Phlegmatick Dreams of Water, Snails, *&c.* The Chollerick of Fire, Quarrels, *&c.* and so of the rest, as to our Enjoyments, Fears, Escapes, *&c.* 'tis effected by the Cooperation of our Constitution, with the Power of our Imagination, our Constitution being the efficient Cause, and our Imagination the Formal.

Quest. 7. *Whether since 'tis your Opinion that if a Man be a discreet and prudent Man, he may correct the misbehaviour of his Wife by beating, vice versa, a Wife being so qualified, and having a Sot to her Husband, whether she may not (if able) beat her Husband?*

Answ.

Answ. The power was at first vested in Man specifically, without Provisions, distinctions, or Limitations of Sot, fooliſh, weak, *&c.* Therefore theſe altering not his Species by conſequence, cannot annul his Prerogative.

Queſt. 9, *Whether 'tis poſſible to commit a Sin, whereof we have no former Idea in our Mind?*

Anſw. The committing a Sin ſuppoſes a Breach of ſome Law, but there is no Law againſt what is not, and where there is no Law, there is no Tranſgreſſion.

Queſt. 10. *What is the Circumference and thickneſs of the Earth?*

Anſw. Elias Veneti commenting on *Sacrobosk*, affirmeth the Earths compaſs to extend 250000 *Stadia*, (8 whereof make a mile,) which does far exceed the received Opinion of the moſt expert Mathematicians of all Nations, whoſe diverſity in Aſſertions proceeds not from a miſtaking the Truth, but from the diverſity of Miles in divers Nations, which if you conſult the Maps, you will find to be great. If the Queſtion be asked in *Britiſh* miles, we ſay, He that Travels 60 miles towards the North, ſhall perceive the Pole to riſe a degree higher, and the Equinoctial to fall a degree lower. Now 60 miles anſwering a Degree, and there being 360 in the great Circle, it follows, that 360 multiplied by 60, produces 21600 miles *Britiſh* —— As to the thickneſs of the Earth, the proportion of a Circles Circumference to it's Diameter, is ſomething more than triple, called by Mathematicians *Seſquiſeptima*, or as 22 to 7. Now upon working by the Rule of proportion, the Diameter or Thickneſs of the Earth is found to be near 7000 miles *Britiſh*.

Queſt. 11. *Why does the Needle in the Sea Compaſs always turn to the North?*

Anſw. Ariſtotle in his Phyſicks, affirms, (*lib.* 7. and with him moſt Philoſophers,) that the *Load-ſtone* attracteth *Iron* unto it by their ſimilitude and likeneſs of Subſtances; for ſo you ſee they are both of the like Colour; *Caſpar Botholomy* ſays, That the *Load-ſtone* does not meerly and ſolely by its attractive Faculty draw *Iron* unto it, but that it is nouriſhed and fed by *Iron*. The moſt receiv'd Opinion is, That there is under our North Pole an huge black Rock, from under which the Ocean iſſueth forth in four Currents, anſwerable to the four Corners of the Earth, or four Winds, which Rock is thought to be all of *Load-ſtone*; ſo that by a kind of affinity, it draweth all ſuch like Stones or other Metals touched by them towards it.

Queſt. 12. *Why the Sea is ſalt?*

Anſw. The reaſon of it is the *Sun*, by whoſe Beams the more thin and ſubtle parts are exhal'd in Vapours, when the more groſs and terreſtrial parts are left behind, and become Aduſt and Salt. This is evident, in that the Southern Seas are ſalter, and that more in Summer than the others are: And therefore it is, that the deeper the Water the freſher it is, the Sun having moſt power at the top; Upon the ſame account our Urine is ſalt, in reſpect that the thinner and purer part of that Moiſture, by our inbred Heat is convey'd and carry'd from our Stomach through the Pores, when the other ſettles; and the longer time it is kept in the Body, the ſalter it grows by the power of Heat working upon it, as 'tis evident, by our much Drinking, when Urine paſſes quickly, it is almoſt of the ſame Nature as it was in the Liquor.

Queſt. 13. *Whether Fiſhes may be ſaid to Breath?*

Anſw. This *Queſtion* hath been long agitated *pro & contra*, *Ariſtotle* denying that they can breathe, *Plato* and his Followers affirm they can: *Ariſtotle* maintaining the Negative, Reaſons thus: Creatures that want Organs and Inſtruments of breathing, cannot be ſaid to breathe or reſpire; but ſuch are all Fiſhes; therefore, *&c.* —— The *Platoniſts* thus maintain their Breathing: All living Creatures denyed of Breath, dye. But Fiſhes are living Creatures: Therefore, *&c.* The Major is Erroneous, For I have known a *Quarry* or *Rock* of Stone broke aſunder for building, and in a ſolid place of it, there lay a Toad, with juſt room for her Body and no more; and when the Rock was broken, and the Toad came into the open Air, it immediately dyed, which ſhews that Creatures may live without Air. The *Ariſtotelian* Doctrine is certainly the Truth, *viz.* That Fiſhes do not breathe, having no Lungs the Inſtruments of Breathing.

Queſtions ſent in this Week yet unanſwered, which we ſhall take Notice of in the next.

Queſt. 1. *Why Maſter* Smith *the Coffee-man in your* Advertiſement, *and plain* Mathew *and* Luke *in your* Quotations?

Queſt. 2. *Why a Horſe*, &c. The Querift knows well enough what the reſt was.

Queſt. 3. *What cauſes the Ebbing and flowing of the Sea?*

Queſt. 4. *What's the reaſon that ſome Men have no Beards?*

Queſt. 5. *Whence proceeds laughing and weeping from one and the ſame thing?*

Queſt. 6. *Whether there be Witches? and what good Books have been written on that Subject?*

Queſt. 7. *Why Fiſh that live in Salt Water taſte freſh, as* Whitings, *&c.*

Queſt. 8. *Whether there is a* Vacuum, *and where?*

Queſt. 9. *Whether there is a Philophers Stone?*

Queſt. 10. *Why do the Hair and Nails of Dead People grow?*

Queſt. 11. *How Beaſts came into Iſlands?*

Queſt. 12. *Whether is happier a marryed or unmarryed State?*

Queſt. 13. *What ſort of Government is beſt?*

Queſt. 14. *Who is the Author of the laſt Query?*

Queſt. 15. *If the Star in the Conſtellation of* Caſſiopeia, *ſeen about* 1619, *and never before or ſince, was a Miracle?*

Queſt. 16. *Whether what Dr.* Sherlock *cites out of Biſhop* Overal's *Convocation Book, and other his Aſſertions, be ſufficient to ground an Oath of Allegiance upon?*

Queſt. 17. *Whether a Confeſſor may diſcover Secrets committed to him?*

Queſt. 18. Quæritur num *Argentum Vivum* a natura productum (quod nomen Liquoris æterni apud Plinium meruit,) inveniri poterit decies ſepties aqua Thamiſi pondereſius, & apud quem venale reperitur Londini.

Queſt. 19. *Are Miracles ceas'd?*

Queſt. 20. *What are we to think of thoſe that dye in Infancy?*

Queſt. 21. *Whether* Poligamy *was lawful to the* Jews?

Queſt. 22. *What is the cauſe of Titillation?*

We have receiv'd ſome *Queſtions* which we think not proper to take any notice of, our Deſign being to anſwer only what is a *fitting Entertainment for the Ingenious*, or what does conſiſt with *Faith and good Manners*: And if we have now, or ſhould hereafter omit the Reſolution of any ſuch Queſtions ſent us, (through over-ſight or otherwiſe,) upon freſh notice given by the Enquirer, he may expect an Anſwer to his full ſatisfaction. 'Tis true, we have already receiv'd ſome Queſtions that are very fit to be anſwered, but are not ſo proper for *Coffee-houſes*; as to all ſuch we ſhall preſerve them carefully by us till the concluſion of our *firſt Volume*, which will be *Numb.* 30. and then they ſhall be publiſht with a full reſolution, together with a *Preface* and *Index* to the whole; And this will be the method we ſhall always obſerve. As to the *Objections* which we receive from time to time, we deſign to anſwer them every *three Weeks*; for by that time we ſuppoſe we ſhall have enough to fill one Paper.

Continue to ſend your *Queſtions* as directed in the firſt *Gazette*, viz. To be left at Mr. *Smith's* Coffee-houſe in *Stocks-market*.

ADVERTISEMENT.

There being through a Miſtake ſeveral ſeeming Reflections inſerted in Religio Bibliopolæ, *(which being altogether both undeſerved and undeſigned,) are now left out throughout the whole Impreſſion. The ſaid Book was both Licens'd and Entred according to Order before ever publiſh'd.*

P. Smart.

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